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To: Carole Bird
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FCC REPORTS ULTIMA HORA NETWORK NEWS DECEMBER 15-30
PART 2

12/16/2010

TAX CUTE VOTE
LOURDES MELUZA- WASHINGTON, DC
PKG: 2:00

House Democratic leaders had planned to hold a final vote on the tax package for this evening, but it's looking like that could slip amid a dispute over terms of the debate. Some Democrats want to make changes to the package President Barack Obama negotiated with Republicans, and vote is expected on imposing a higher estate tax. Such a change could derail the bill, but Democratic leaders are leaving the arm-twisting to the White House. Obama is urging the House to pass the bill as is, so he can sign it into law before a sweeping series of tax cuts expires at the end of the year. New York Democrat Louise Slaughter, who chairs the House Rules Committee, says it's "a vote people are making for their consciences." And California Democrat Xavier Becerra (hahv-YEHR' beh-SEH'-rah) says Obama "has been working it hard." Still many Democrats, even critics of the bill, are resigned to it ultimately passing with the lower estate tax. The Senate passed it yesterday by a 81-19 vote.

DREAM ACT VOTE
VO: 26

Faced with the prospects of having to literally read the full 1924 pages of an omnibus spending bill, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) chose on Thursday night to pull the measure in favor of a continuing resolution to keep government funding. Republicans, presented with the news, could barely hide their glee. "Did we just win?" asked newly elected Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), a rhetorical question that seemed to engender sharp rebukes from Democrats. Kirk was directing his remarks to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who had chastised the spending bill as a pork-filled "monstrosity" before relating his sadness at no longer being able to make examples out of the earmarks in the measure. That, of course, was a rather

one-sided if not unfair description of the bill. And what McCain left out of his remarks was the fact that Republican Senators had inserted their own earmarks into the legislation. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who said his preference was for a one-page "clean" substitute, had more than \$100 million dollars worth in spending earmarks in the measure. The Minority Leader had also rather than a continuing resolution before the November election.

AFGHANISTAN EVALUATION
LOURDES DEL RÍO-MIAMI, FL
PKG: 2:13

President Barack Obama's expansion of the war in Afghanistan has eroded the power of the al-Qaida terrorists who attacked America in 2001 and the resurgent Taliban militants who gave them cover, according to his own government's review. The findings ensure that Obama will stay the course, with U.S. forces to remain at war through 2014. U.S. troops will begin to leave Afghanistan in July, according to the report, the same timeline that Obama promised one year ago and has consistently upheld in recent weeks. But the scope and pace of that withdrawal remain unclear, and both are expected to be modest, given the enormity of the security and governance challenges in Afghanistan. All the findings will be tested in the months and years to come. They form the basis not just of Obama's war strategy but also his credibility with the American people on how this long, costly war is going and when it will end. The United States and its NATO allies hope to turn control of the Afghanistan conflict to that nation's own forces by the end of 2014, a timeline endorsed in the new review. Even then, Obama envisions an enduring U.S. role in Afghanistan. The White House on Wednesday evening released a five-page summary of the newly finished, classified evaluation of the war strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan that Obama unveiled to much fanfare in December 2009.

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12/17/10

TAX CUT EXTENSION
LOURDES DEL RIO- MIAMI, FLORIDA
PKG 2:20

President Barack Obama signed into law a huge, holiday-season tax bill extending cuts for all Americans on Friday,

saluting a new spirit of political compromise as Republicans applauded and liberals seethed. The benefits range from tax cuts for millionaires and the middle class to longer-term help for the jobless. The most significant tax legislation in nearly a decade will avert big increases that would have hit millions of people starting in two weeks on New Year's Day. Obama said as a rare bipartisan assembly of lawmakers looked on at the White House. The package retains Bush-era tax rates for all taxpayers, including the wealthiest Americans, a provision Obama and congressional liberals opposed. It also offers 13 months of extended benefits to the unemployed and attempts to stimulate the economy with a Social Security payroll tax cut for all workers.

DREAM ACT LATEST
LOURDES MELUZA- WASHINGTON, DC
PKG 3:27

The U.S. Senate is expected to cast a crucial vote Saturday on the DREAM Act, which would pave the way for possibly hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants to legalize their status. And both opponents and supporters of the DREAM Act cranked up their arguments Friday, with Republican congressional leaders sending out a long list of reasons why the measure would be harmful for the country, and Democrats countering that not passing it would be detrimental. Even Department of Homeland Security officials, including the heads of the main immigration agencies, joined the down-to-the-wire blitz, urging the passage of the DREAM Act. Thursday night, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., scheduled the vote on the highly controversial measure, which would make undocumented immigrants younger than 30 years of age eligible for conditional legal status if they meet a strict set of criteria. The so-called cloture vote would not be on the bill itself, but on whether to move toward a debate and then vote on the bill. Also on the schedule for a cloture vote is the bill that would repeal the ban on gays serving openly in the military.

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12/20/10

STRANDED PASSENGERS
VO: 21

UK tourists stranded in New York were facing the prospect of Christmas away from home, as snow and freezing temperatures grounded flights across northern Europe on Monday (December 20). Only one of two

runways at London's Heathrow airport -- the world's busiest international airport -- was operating after a weekend snowstorm, forcing thousands to camp out in terminals. At the British Airways Terminal at New York's JFK Airport, frustrated passengers said they were running out of patience - and not to mention, cash. Karina and Jennifer Flack from Cambridge, England, said they couldn't afford to stay in a hotel while their flights were delayed, and came to the airport to see if they could catch an earlier flight. "We were supposed to get home on Sunday night, but our flight got cancelled. We've managed to get a flight for Wednesday but we can't afford to stay in a hotel, so we've come to hopefully get some answers. Because we can't get through on the phones, or even on the Internet now," Karina said. The siblings said they hoped the weather conditions would ease soon.

POLITICAL REDISTRICTING DUE TO CENSUS RESULTS

BLANCA ROSA VÍLCHEZ- NEW YORK

PKG 2:34

The 2010 census report coming out Tuesday will include a boatload of good political news for Republicans and grim data for Democrats hoping to re-elect President Barack Obama and rebound from last month's devastating elections. The population continues to shift from Democratic-leaning Rust Belt states to Republican-leaning Sun Belt states, a trend the Census Bureau will detail in its once-a-decade report to the president. Political clout shifts, too, because the nation must reapportion the 435 House districts to make them roughly equal in population, based on the latest census figures. The biggest gainer will be Texas, a GOP-dominated state expected to gain up to four new House seats, for a total of 36. The chief losers New York and Ohio, each projected by nongovernment analysts to lose two seats were carried by Obama in 2008 and are typical of states in the Northeast and Midwest that are declining in political influence. Democrats' problems don't end there. November's elections put Republicans in control of dozens of state legislatures and governorships, just as states prepare to redraw their congressional and legislative district maps. It's often a brutally partisan process, and Republicans' control in those states will enable them to create new districts to their liking.

GAYS IN MILITARY

VO: 18

The White House says President Barack Obama will sign the repeal of the military's ban on openly gay service members on Wednesday morning at a Department of Interior auditorium. With a stroke of his pen, the president

will end the Pentagon's 17-year, don't-ask, don't tell" policy. In repealing the ban, Obama will fulfill a 2008 presidential campaign promise. Press secretary Robert Gibbs would not say how long it would take for the administration to implement the repeal. But he said he didn't expect it to be "overly burdensome." In letters to the troops over the Weekend, the four military service chiefs warned that the ban is still in place, and will be for some time To come.

TOYOTA RECALL

VO:20

Toyota Motor Corp. has agreed to pay the government a record \$32.4 million in additional fines to settle an investigation into its handling of two recalls at the heart of its safety crisis. The Transportation Department said late Monday the civil penalties will settle investigations into how Toyota dealt with recalls over accelerator pedals that could get trapped in floor mats, and teering relay rods that could break and lead to drivers losing control. The latest settlement, on top of a \$16.4 million fine Toyota paid earlier in a related investigation, brings the total penalties levied on the company to \$48.8 million. It caps a difficult year for the world's No. 1 automaker, which recalled more than 11 million vehicles globally since the fall of 2009 as it scrambled to protect its reputation for safety and reliability. Toyota's board of directors agreed to pay the fines on Tuesday at the company's board meeting in Japan, according to an official familiar with the case, and the company said it agreed to the penalties without admitting to any violations of U.S. laws.

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12/21/2010

TERRORISTS THREAT WARNINGS

LOURDES DEL RIO- MIAMI, FLORIDA

PKG 1:57

Attorney General Eric Holder says he's worried about terrorist attacks on the U.S. by Americans. And high on his list of concerns is the threat posed by anti-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen believed to be hiding in Yemen. Holder says al-Awlaki has a familiarity with the U.S. that terrorists usually lack. He says he puts him on the list of people who worry him the most, along with al-Qaida head Osama bin Laden. In an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America," Holder said the terrorism threat is real and constant. He says he's concerned that the authorities may have

missed a signal that an attack is coming. He says Americans have to be prepared for "potentially bad news."

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12/22/10

CONGRESS HEALTH- 911 ATTACKS
BLANCA ROSA VILCHEZ- NUEVA YORK
PKG 1:57

The Senate has passed a package of health care and economic aid for people sickened by dust from the ruins of September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The measure was passed on a voice vote with no one objecting after Democrats and Republican critics reached a compromise reducing the bill's cost from \$6.2 billion to \$4.2 billion. The bill provides free health care and compensation for lost wages and other economic losses to first-responders for the Sept. 11 terrorist attack and survivors who fell ill after being exposed to toxins from the trade center ruins. New York and New Jersey lawmakers have waged a long, bitter fight for the measure. The House was expected to vote on it later Wednesday before Congress adjourns for the year.

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12/23/10

HOLIDAY HEART SYNDROME
LUIS MEGID- SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
PKG 1:40

The term "holiday heart syndrome" was coined in 1978 when researchers detected heart rhythm abnormalities in 24 study participants, none of whom had a history of heart disease. What they all did have was too much to drink, too fast. Since then, several studies have confirmed alcohol's heart rhythm-disturbing effects. The most common abnormal heart rhythm, atrial fibrillation, occurs when the upper heart chambers quiver instead of contracting regularly. Although it's often asymptomatic, it can lead to congestive heart failure or stroke. As the moniker suggests, holiday heart syndrome peaks on weekends and at holidays. Although alcohol alone can derail normal heart rhythms, its effects are exaggerated when mixed with caffeine. Rimmerman warned against the popular practice of mixing alcohol with energy drinks, calling it a "very bad combination."

XMASS TRAVELING
LOURDES DEL RIO- MIAMI, FLORIDA
PKG 1:57

Fair weather helped make the holiday sojourn a not-so-painful experience in much of the country Thursday, even with more people hitting the roads and skies than last year, but travelers' good luck might be running out. A storm was expected to bring a snow and ice to parts of the heartland Friday, a rare white Christmas to Nashville on Saturday, and perhaps sock swaths of the Northeast on Sunday. The AAA has expected overall travel to rise about 3 percent this year, with more than 92 million people planning to go more than 50 miles sometime between now and Jan. 2. More than 90 percent said they would be driving. The Air Transport Association was expecting 44.3 million people on U.S. flights between Dec. 16 and Jan. 5 -- up 3 percent over the same period a year ago but still below pre-recession travel volume. The average ticket price is \$421, up by 5 percent.

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12/24/10

ALERT ISSUED ON BEVERAGE CONTAINERS ON PLANES
VO:20

The U.S. Homeland Security Department has alerted air carriers to a potential terror tactic involving insulated beverage containers like thermoses. The alert stressed that there is no intelligence about an active terror plot, but travelers may notice airport screeners taking a closer look at empty insulated containers. The Transportation Security Administration "is carefully monitoring information related to terrorist tactics" in coordination with other nations, TSA spokeswoman Sterling Payne said in a statement Thursday. "The possible tactics terrorists might use include the concealment of explosives inside insulated beverage containers, so in the coming days, passengers flying within and to the U.S. may notice additional security measures related to insulated beverage containers."

ONLINE HOLIDAY SHOPPING JUMPS 15 PERCENT TO \$36.4B
VO: 20

Online spending rose 15 percent during the holidays, new data shows, as more Americans responded to online sales and free shipping offers and shifted more of their dollars online. Total online sales between Oct. 31 and Thursday rose 15.4 percent to a record \$36.4 billion, compared with \$31.5

billion a year ago, according to figures released Thursday from MasterCard Advisors' SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all transactions including cash. Several categories, including clothing and electronics, gained share of overall category sales as well. "Americans are really changing way that they shop and the way they spend," said Michael McNamara, vice president of research and analysis for SpendingPulse.

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12/27/10

US WEATHER

ALEX ROLAND- NEW YORK

PKG 1:44

An East Coast blizzard that has forced more than 5,000 flight cancelations will leave many travelers stranded through the end of the week. Runways were expected to reopen this evening at several major airports in the Northeast. Still, hundreds of thousands of passengers missed flights Sunday and Monday into and out of Philadelphia, New York and Boston. Once the airports reopen, people will have a hard time finding room on later flights. Seats are already scarce because of the busy holiday season, and airlines are operating fewer flights than they did before the recession. Airlines have to get their planes back to the Northeast before they can fly stranded travelers. They may also have to ferry pilots and flight attendants into the affected areas. American Airlines spokesman Ed Martelle said if the weather clears by Tuesday, the airline can resume a normal schedule by Wednesday. He declined to say how long stuck passengers might wait for an empty seat.

AT&T DOCUMENTARY ABOUT TEXTING AND DRIVING

JAIME GARCIA- LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PKG 2:06

The wireless company planned to release the video today, before New Year's Eve. The timing is aimed, the company said, at showing that texting and driving deserves to be considered as dangerous as drunk driving. The documentary includes intense, sometimes disturbing, images, including that of Ms. West, as she spent her last minutes alive on a breathing tube. Research from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute shows that motorists who text face a 23 times greater risk of crash or near crash. Other wireless carriers, like Verizon Wireless, have in the last year stepped up efforts to warn about the risks of texting and driving. AT&T said it plans

to distribute the documentary to schools, safety organizations and government agencies, and is urging people to take a pledge on its Facebook page not to text and drive.

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12/29/10

MORE JOBS FOR 2011
LOURDES MELUZA/ WASHINGTON, DC
PKG : 2:10

A new CareerBuilder survey finds that more employers plan to add full-time workers in 2011 compared to 2010. The survey found that new hiring is more likely "in technology and revenue-producing fields." "More than half of employers reported they are in a better financial position today than they were one year ago," Matt Ferguson, CEO of CareerBuilder, said in the survey statement. "2011 will usher in a healthier employment picture as business leaders grow more confident in the economy. Our survey indicates more jobs will be added in 2011 than 2010, but job creation will remain gradual. The year will be characterized by steady, measured gains across various industries." The hiring outlook is different by geographic region, with the West having the best outlook and the Midwest and South having the lowest percentage hiring expectation. According to the survey, 26% of hiring managers in the West reported they plan to add full-time, permanent headcount followed by 24% in the Northeast and 23% in the Midwest and South. Plans to downsize staffs are trending below the last two years, with 8% of employers in the South expecting to decrease headcount followed by 7% in the Northeast, Midwest and West. Harris Interactive conducted the survey for CareerBuilder from Nov. 15 to Dec. 2, 2010, with input from more than 2,400 hiring managers and human resource professionals across industries and company sizes.

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12/30/10

FLU CASES UP
VO:18

Flu season appears to be picking up. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says five states had widespread reports of flu last week, up from zero two weeks earlier. ACDC report released Thursday says four of the states were in the South -- Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Virginia.

The other was New York. The report also says that tests of about 120 virus samples show the circulating flu strains seem to be well-matched to this season's flu vaccine. Health officials say an estimated 23,600 flu-related deaths occur each year.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES

VO:21

New U.S. claims for unemployment benefits dropped more than expected last week to their lowest level in more than two years, suggesting the labor market recovery was gaining strength. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits fell 34,000 to a seasonally adjusted 388,000, the lowest reading since early July 2008, the Labor department said Thursday. That was well below economists' expectations for 415,000. The prior week's claims figure was revised modestly up to 422,000 from the previously reported 420,000. A Labor Department official said there was nothing unusual in the state-level data and described the report as clean. The four-week average of new jobless claims, considered a better measure of underlying labor market trends, fell 12,500 to 414,000, the lowest level since the week ending July 26, 2008.

DEPORTATION NUMBERS

VO:24

A record number of immigrants were deported from the United States in 2010 and the year also has been marked by the expansion of the Secure Communities program of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which identifies imprisoned undocumented foreigners. During Fiscal Year 2010, ICE deported 392,862 undocumented foreigners, of whom more than 195,000 were convicted criminals, an increase of more than 23,000 deportations - including 81,000 people with criminal records - compared with 2008. In 2009, deportations totaled 389,834 and the goal for 2011 is 404,000. ICE broadened the Secure Communities program, a biometric technology effort that compares the fingerprints of people being held in local jails with those in ICE and FBI databases. Up through November 2009, the one-year anniversary of the implementation of the measure, which operated at that time in 95 detention centers in 11 states, John Morton, the Homeland Security assistant secretary for ICE, announced that Secure Communities had detected 11,000 undocumented foreigners accused of major crimes such as murder, rape and kidnapping. Currently, the program is operating at 891 incarceration centers in 35 states.

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